

Fig. 1 is a side view of a bell-shaped tampon pledget according to the present invention.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on line 12 of page 9 of the specification with the following rewritten paragraph:

--The tampon pledget of the present invention has its insertion end recessed into the center of the pledget, and is crimped or compressed to a certain extent for insertion into a tampon applicator. The compression should be just enough so that the tampon pledget is "spring-loaded" in the tampon applicator. Once ejected from the tampon applicator, the tampon pledget will expand rapidly preferably into a bell-like shape configuration. The tip or top of this bell-shaped pledget has the removal string secured to it, while the other end of the tampon pledget forms the base of the bell.--

#### **IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Twice amended) A dry expanding tampon pledget comprising:

a plurality of non-absorbent fibers; and

a plurality of absorbent fibers, wherein said plurality of non-absorbent fibers and said plurality of absorbent fibers are blended together to form the dry expanding tampon pledget, and

wherein immediately after complete ejection from an applicator, and prior to contact with menses, the dry expanding tampon pledget has a free diameter at a widest point from about 25% to about 300% larger than a diameter of the dry expanding tampon pledget in the applicator.

Please cancel claim 15 without prejudice.

Please amend claim 16 as follows:

16. (Twice amended) A dry expanding tampon pledget comprising:

a plurality of non-absorbent fibers; and

a plurality of absorbent fibers, wherein said plurality of non-absorbent fibers and said plurality of absorbent fibers are blended together to form the dry expanding tampon pledget,

wherein a percent ratio of said plurality of non-absorbent fibers to said plurality of absorbent fibers is about 25/75 to about 65/35, and

wherein immediately after complete ejection from an applicator, and prior to contact with menses, the dry expanding tampon pledget has a free diameter at a widest point from about 25% to about 300% larger than a diameter of the dry expanding tampon pledget in the applicator.

Please amend claim 18 as follows:

18. (Twice amended) A dry expanding tampon pledget comprising:

a plurality of non-absorbent fibers, wherein said plurality of non-absorbent fibers are selected from the group consisting of polyester, polypropylene, polyethylene, aramid, nylon, acrylic, bicomponent, and mixtures thereof; and

a plurality of absorbent fibers, wherein said plurality of absorbent fibers are selected from the group consisting of rayon, lyocell, wood pulp, cotton, superabsorbent, and any combinations thereof,

wherein said plurality of non-absorbent fibers and said plurality of absorbent fibers are blended together to form the dry expanding tampon pledget, and

wherein immediately after complete ejection from an applicator, and prior to contact with menses, the dry expanding tampon pledget has a free diameter at a widest point from about 25% to about 300% larger than a diameter of the dry expanding tampon pledget in the applicator.

Please amend claim 20 as follows:

20. (Amended) The tampon pledget of claim 18, wherein said plurality of absorbent fibers are made of a combination of rayon fibers and superabsorbent fibers.